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THE PRACTICE OF ANATTA FOR WORLD PEACE

Abstract

Anatta, or non-self, is a core concept in Buddhism. The theory of anatta, or non-self, indicates a Buddhist perspective that the world, including the self, is impermanent and constantly changing, rather than hypothesizing the absence of self. It suggests that beings and phenomena in the world do not exist as isolated entities, but they coexist and mutually support each other for survival. In other words, life is about cooperation and development, rather than fighting to assert one's ego. War has occurred in the world due to opposing views and the struggle for benefits. However, war is less beneficial than cooperation and mutual support, as it causes losses at all times. It is the practice of anatta that supports the coexistence of entities among opposing views, suggesting the role of anatta in world peace. This article argues for the importance of understanding the characteristics of the self (atta) and the role of realizing selflessness in reducing conflicts and struggles. At the same time, the article also sheds light on the connection between the realization of selflessness in harmony and the practice of bringing personal peace to world peace. Wars and conflicts will vanish on earth, and world peace will be maintained when there is peace in individuals' minds, resulting from the practice of anatta.

Keywords: anatta, coexistence, cooperation, no-self, selflessness, world peace

1. Introduction

Anatta, in Buddhism, is the teaching that human beings do not possess an eternal essence or any inherent potential that can be considered a soul, or a doctrine that denies the

existence of the self (Gombrich, 2009). Instead, each individual is made up of five elements (Pālikhandha; Sanskrit skandha), which are ever-changing and impermanent. The concept of anattā, or anatman, departs from the Hindu belief in atman ("self"). In fact, people tend to view everything as fixed, clinging to external events, which leads to suffering and dissatisfaction (MacKenzie, 2012).

Anatta is closely related to three important concepts in Buddhism: ethical behaviors (sīla), concentration (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā). Buddhist ethics refer to the principles that guide human behavior (Barnhart, 2012). This realization is a system of moral responsibility that describes what a person can and cannot do (Davis, 2016). In contrast to ethics, concentration is primarily concerned with focusing one's attention. People need to focus on what they are doing to overcome personal problems, suggesting that mindfulness can be a beneficial tool (Bucknell, 2022). Both ethics and meditation are core Buddhist practices that help people understand themselves and the world around them. When they understand themselves and their surroundings, they can empathize with and respect the events that occur in life (Sayadaw, 2016). In general, the specific practices of precepts, concentration, and wisdom are based on the doctrine of selflessness, which supports personal development and helps people solve their own problems, ultimately leading to harmony with the world.

The Buddhist perspective on peace emphasizes the importance of compassion, nonviolence, and inner harmony (Harvey, 2000). Buddhism argues that peace begins within each person's mind, free from the attachments of greed, hatred, and delusion. Moreover, recognizing the non-self as a practice reduces attachment to the self and promotes healthy relationships, especially among politicians who have a general influence on the world. Recognizing that there is no fixed ego or self-centeredness does not lead to a distinction between right and wrong; this perspective, or that of others, helps people see it more generously and sympathetically. The Buddha taught that all activities and actions must be based on moral mindfulness and the development of compassion to destroy hatred and violence. An understanding of selflessness is essential to attaining absolute

liberation of the mind (Kang, 1999). Overall, the theory of not-self (anattā) helps people recognize their true nature, rather than letting the illusion of their self consume each person. From there, they are liberated from ignorance and gain an objective, correct view, known as the right view (samma-ditthi).

According to a 2023 report by Escola Pau, armed conflicts have reached record levels, with more than 120 million people forcibly displaced worldwide (Escola Pau, 2024).

Similarly, the Geneva Academy currently monitors over 110 armed conflicts worldwide, documenting the actors involved, recent developments, and the relevant international legal frameworks applicable to them. While some of these conflicts dominate international headlines, many others remain largely unnoticed (Geneva Academy, n.d., para. 1).

From these figures, it becomes evident that global instability is closely tied to the instability of the human mind—including the minds of political leaders and decision-makers. This perspective highlights the importance of the Buddhist principle of anattā (not-self): by cultivating inner balance, mitigating ego-driven impulses, and fostering compassion, individuals and societies can establish the psychological foundations necessary for enduring peace. Greater understanding and application of anattā could therefore contribute meaningfully to both inner harmony and global stability.

The main object of this article is to understand the characteristics of the ego (atta) and the role of the awareness of the self (anatta) in bringing about inner harmony and world peace. The understanding that nothing, including human beings, has an immutable self-nature reveals an important relationship between transforming perception and behavior through ethical practices and meditation.

The following questions will guide the in-depth discussion in the article:

- How can the doctrine of anattā and related practices be considered solutions that help people resolve conflicts and lead to world peace?

2. Theory of Selflessness

2.1. Concept of selflessness (anattā)

In the context of India's rich cultural and religious diversity, the Buddha's remarkable

discovery regarding human nature and the entire world as non-self is considered a unique insight. Anatta is one of the most profound teachings of the Buddha, yet it is also a foundational principle of Buddhist teachings. Understanding the concept of non-self (anattā) enables one to grasp other related topics in Buddhist teachings.

"Anattā" in Pāli or "anātman" in Sanskrit is widely defined as "not-self." This term is a core concept in Buddhism, stating that nothing is unchanging or permanent (Gombrich, 2009). In fact, because humans tend to perceive things as permanent, they become attached to phenomena in the outside world, which often leads to suffering and dissatisfaction. (MacKenzie, Matthew, 2009).

According to Collins, anatta presents itself in three primary forms (Collins, Steven, 1990). First, "no self" means no identity, indicating the absence of both a self and an identification of who we are or what a phenomenon is. Second, when humans understand that there is no self, they are not conceited. In other words, they do not recognize themselves as better or worse than others. Ultimately, since there is no self, humans should refrain from labeling things as right or wrong. That means they do not believe they are right, and opposing views are wrong. These three forms of anatta are not separate but interrelated. The first two forms incorporate the third one.

Anatta is generally related to three important concepts in Buddhism: Buddhist ethics, concentration, and understanding. Buddhist ethics outline a person's behavior or activity. It is a system of moral duty and obligation that describes what a person can and cannot do. Unlike Buddhist ethics, one-pointedness primarily focuses on one's thoughts and mental processes. One is supposed to concentrate on what they do or are doing to overcome their personal problems, suggesting that mindfulness may be a tremendous help. Buddhist ethics and concentration are believed to develop one's understanding of oneself and the external world. They can empathize with and respect their surroundings when they understand themselves and the world. In general, Buddhist ethics, concentration, and understanding work together to assist personal development, helping individuals resolve their problems and align with the external world.

In Buddhism, the definition of the self is the doctrine that no permanent or fundamental entity can be called the soul (Alexander Wynne, 2009). Instead, each individual is constituted from pañcakkhandha (five aggregates), which are regarded as human nature and constantly change, being impermanent. The word 'anatta' differs from the Hindu tradition of 'atman,' which is related to 'self.' Realizing the non-self (anattā) that is associated with impermanence (anicca) and suffering (dukkha) enhances one's ability to have the right view or direct knowledge in Buddhism (Thomas William, 2008).

Anattā emphasized selflessness through the specific analysis of the Buddha's existence. Accordingly, anattā is denied for anything considered 'self' or 'what belongs to self' in any human or other object. In other words, faith in 'self' or attachment to the self is dukkhasamudaya (the origin of suffering) (Harvey, Emmanuel, 2015), which assumes that things in the world remain unchanged. However, in reality, as change is unavoidable and sometimes unpredictable, humans are sometimes unsatisfied, resulting in suffering, which Buddha mentioned in the Saccavibhanga Sutta (the exposition of the truths) (Bodhi, Saccavibhangasutta, 2000). Liberation occurs when the practitioner comes to realize the reality of existence.

The Buddha denied the existence of an endless and immutable soul because he believed the body and mind were constantly evolving (anicca). The Buddha did not accept both sassatadiṭṭhi (eternalism) and natthikadiṭṭhi (nihilism). Therefore, the thought that there will be a regenerated soul in the next life and death is micchādiṭṭhi (wrong view). Accepting rebirth in the next life leads to understanding that the soul separates from the body after death and moves to another realm or existence. The belief that nothing remains after death leads them not to believe in the fruit of kamma. No concept of 'self' exists independently, but only nāma-rūpa (name and form) changes continuously according to predestined conditions. The feeling of 'self' when we have invested a lot in life, our cognition, our desires - everything, is also a form of defilement due to taṇhā (craving) arising from avijjā (ignorance).

In predominantly Buddhist texts, the term "Attā" or "Attan" describes the ego; many

synonymous words, such as "Atuman," "Tuma," "Puggala," "Jiva," "Satta," "Pana," and "nāmarūpa," have similar meanings. The use of the terms Atta, Purisa, and Puggala in various contexts naturally reveals the ego's denial in ancient Buddhist texts. Later, the appearance of terms such as 'puggala', which means immutable subject or eternal soul, contributed to the formation of the anattā doctrine in later Buddhist documents (Steven et al, 1990).

The Buddhist viewpoint of anatta, which rejects the existence of an immutable self, differs significantly from those of Christianity and Indian religions. Moreover, this doctrine is the root of Buddhist practice, leading to enlightenment and awakening. In conclusion, a deep understanding and application of anattā could contribute meaningfully to both inner harmony and global stability.

2.2 Two kinds of selflessness

To gain an in-depth grasp of the selflessness doctrine, the writer analyzed two typical suttas in the Nikāya, including the Anattalakkhaṇasutta (The characteristic of not-self) and the Suññatālokaṣutta (Empty is the world). These two suttas illustrate how the Buddha contemplated and discussed the truth of selflessness in humans, focusing on the five elements of nāma-rūpa (name and form), which make up a human being without an intrinsic entity, as well as the emptiness of the world arising from various dependent conditions.

2.2.1 Selflessness of the Person

The Anattalakkhaṇasutta (the characteristic is non-self) is the second discourse of the Buddha, aimed at helping disciples abandon the clinging to the false belief that there is an existence of 'self' and 'what belongs to self.' This term refers to the concepts, emotions, or attributes that people often assign to themselves; however, from a Buddhist perspective, these concepts, states of the mind, do not have a fixed entity and cannot exist independently. The Buddha explained thoroughly and pointed out that contemplating the real body-mind of the five aggregates as not-self is essential. The Buddha constantly raises the problem through questions and answers to the five mendicants:

Is 'form' permanent or impermanent? Nevertheless, if it is impermanent, is it suffering or happiness? But if something is temporary, causes pain, and is perishable, can it be mine or my true self? (Bodhi, Anattalakkhaṇasutta, 2000).

Through asking the listener, the Buddha also creates opportunities for the other person to contemplate and evaluate whether what he has raised is right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate, specifically in relation to the observation of pañcakkhandha (five aggregates).

The Buddha slowly outlined the truth in the five elements, cleverly peeling away the layers like a banana peel. At the beginning of the sutta, he asserted, 'Form is not self.' The first reason is given for this assertion: 'If the form were itself, it would not lead to affliction.' He then stated that people hope their physical form will resemble certain ideals, but it often does not meet those expectations. Therefore, witnessing the spontaneous evolution of the physical body causes one to feel disappointed and despair. For instance, a woman often experiences fear due to changes in her appearance over time, which can contribute to the aging process. This change may affect her husband's ability to remain dispassionate toward their relationship. This case illustrates the close association between misery and the transformation of form.

As mentioned in the Anattalakkhaṇasutta, the second factor in the five aggregates is vedanākkhandha (feeling), which is also not-self. Vedanā means feelings, sensations, or awareness anywhere in the body and mind, such as hot, cold, aches, numbness, happiness or pleasantness, misery or unpleasantness, etc. Vedanāsutta distinguishes three types of feelings: (1) "Unpleasant feeling" means the sense of discomfort, (2) "pleasant feeling" means a sense of comfort and happiness, and (3) neutral feeling means neither joyful nor miserable. (Bodhi, Vedanāsutta, 2000). Under the guidance of the Buddha, one could understand that such feelings and those feelings are also not-self, rising and ceasing constantly. Moreover, according to the law of dependent origination, vedanā (feeling) was born by the phassa (contact) 'phassapaccayāvedanā' (contact leads to feeling). For example, when a man meets a beautiful woman, he tends to consider her

attractive or likable. It is a kind of pleasant emotion, and it is reversed when one encounters an unpleasant situation. These two individuals, whether beautiful or ugly, are just two sets of five aggregates, but different ways of expression indicate that even feelings are non-self.

The third element of the five aggregates, *saññā* (perception), is also not-self. *Saññā* are the thoughts and perceptions, that is, the ideas that arise in the mind because there is contact between the five sense-organs and the five external objects, recognized, and labeled (the shape of a house, fear of a ghost) (Peter, 2013). *Saññā* is a complex Buddhist concept with various meanings in English as follows: mental formations, dispositions, reactions; conditioned phenomena, subliminal impressions; karmic impulses; inherited forces; constructing activities; habitual potencies; 'habits or tendencies' (Nagapriya, 2004). *Saññā* is considered a factor characterized by not-self (*anattā*) because mental formations are a process of interpreting sensory information to understand the world around us. *Saññā* (perception) arises from the contact between objects and the sense-organs correspondence. It represents awareness and perception, distinguishing the world through the senses. In addition, *saññā* also labeled the object and formed experience. For example, when someone mentions 'the sea,' we immediately imagine the waves and white sandy beaches. Similarly, when we smell a scent, our mind distinguishes it as the smell of incense, not the smell of flowers. Similarly, when listening to the temple bell, the mind is immediately aware of the chanting or meditation time and defaults to responding when listening to such sounds. *Saññā* is not fixed and changes over time and circumstances. It arises and depends upon many sensory and mental processes. This result indicates that perception is also impermanent and lacks a fixed entity. Therefore, *saññā* is definitely selfless.

The fourth factor is *saṅkhāra* (formation). *Saṅkhāra* encompasses conditioned phenomena, volition, constructive activities, thought processes, and psychological actions that contribute to the creation of karma. An object triggers all types of mental imprints and conditioning (Kalupahana, 1992). It includes conditional reactions that lead to bodily action,

speech, and mental factors. For example, when one is young, they meet beggars and have to wonder why they are in that situation. However, as they grow older, stumble in life, and sometimes face financial struggles, they turn to understand more about the beggars they met in their childhood. During this period, individuals become more compassionate and understanding of the beggars' situation, as they observe themselves in similar circumstances. The individual's saṅkhāra from childhood has evolved due to increased open-mindedness. This awareness fosters their willingness to lead, motivating them to take action now and help anyone without discrimination. The example demonstrates that Saṅkhāra constantly changes over time and under various circumstances, depending on the experiences people encounter. Humans can develop more in every stage of life by acquiring such experiences. Saṅkhāra changes so quickly that we are unsure how to recognize our level of maturity. This explains why we can be honest at times yet feel hate at others. Therefore, Saṅkhāra is not a fixed entity but is subject to many factors from the living environment and external impacts. Saṅkhāra is non-self.

The fifth factor is viññāṇa (consciousness), the last factor in Pañcakhandha, representing the distinction of its components and aspects, specifically the perception, which is the primary stage of consciousness of objects through the six senses (Harvey, 2013). This factor helps identify what we hear, smell, taste, touch, and feel. Viññāṇa receives information from the recognition senses. When there is eye contact with an image object, eye-consciousness (cakkhuvīññāṇa) receives data on information about that picture. In the next stage, Manovīññāṇa (consciousness) arises and distinguishes each of the objects. For example, when the ear receives any sound, sotavīññāṇa (ear-consciousness) arises to distinguish the various types of sound and inform the brain what is heard, such as the sound of the wind, the sound of thunder, or the sound of rain. This fact is available for distinguishing images, colors, tastes, pleasant or uncomfortable feelings, and wholesome or unwholesome thoughts. Viññāṇa cannot operate independently but requires a combination of several other factors, such as rūpa (e.g., body, eye, and ear), vedanā (e.g., feelings), saññā (e.g., perception), and saṅkhāra (e.g., formation and volition). When one is

fast asleep, Viññāṇa also works more weakly when that person wakes up. Therefore, viññāṇa is also impermanent and non-self because it changes continuously.

Overall, human beings have clung to the five aggregates and become attached to the concept of 'self' and 'what belongs to self'; however, in fact, humans are constituted of five aggregates, none of which is considered essential. The statement "This is not mine; I am not this; this is not myself" (Bodhi, Anattalakkhaṇasutta, 2000) demonstrates that the self can be expressed in various forms, including "mine," "I," and "myself." When the wrong view arises, suggesting that something belongs to 'mine' (such as my house), individuals believe that all external phenomena are real. Additionally, a Buddhist follower reflects on the essence of existence, examining what constitutes the self and what is associated with it, in light of the selflessness of the five aggregates, which suggests that all conditioned factors coexist. This reflection disillusioned practitioners by freeing them from attachment to form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness (Bodhi, The Connected Discourses). Therefore, learning to abandon clinging to any conditional phenomena or form allows one to be freed from all the defilements. The meditator who attained enlightenment, the truth of selflessness (anattā), and reached the fruit of liberation (nibbāna), as the first five of the Bhikkhus (mendicants) attained the fruit of freedom and enlightenment after listening to Anattalakkhaṇasutta.

2.2.2. Selflessness of the phenomenon

In the Suññataloka Sutta, the Buddha denied 'what belongs to self' that involves material elements or external phenomena. When Venerable Ananda asked the Buddha why this world was empty, he answered that even the cognitive subject, which means the eye, and the cognitive object, which is the appearance, were empty, because the eye-consciousness (cakkhuvīññāṇa) and form (nāma) were empty (Bodhi, Suññataloka Sutta, 2000). These phenomena illustrate the interconnectedness of perception and point to the importance of a structured analysis of perceptual experience. The presence of the eye raises awareness of itself, allowing it to perceive objects. Moreover, the Buddha explained that loka (world) consists of six sensory experiences entirely of not-self because there is

not-self (anattā) and 'what belongs to self.' The central meaning of this sutta emphasizes the emptiness of the world because the absence of 'self' negates the concept of an existing 'self,' meaning the five aggregates, six sense organs, and six external objects are non-self.

Through the analysis of the selflessness of the five aggregates in the Anattalakkhaṇasutta and the selflessness of the world in the Suññatalokasutta, the Buddha systematically and logically argued to build an Anattā (not-self) doctrine closely. Both the cognitive subject and the object of awareness imply that the existence of humans, encompassed within the five aggregates, is nonself, and the world is also empty. But it's important to note that the Buddhist not-self concept means something exists, and it implies afterlife, reincarnation, or karma's effects. According to Peetush, the ego is understood as an atomic form, similar to a point form that has no extension in space (Peetush, 2018). This understanding fundamentally distinguishes Buddhism from annihilationist schools, as it refutes the existence of a permanent self susceptible to destruction (Harvey, 2013). When Buddhists understand anattā practice methods at a deeper level, the attachment to the views on 'self' and 'what belongs to self' is less. They begin to realize that life is impermanent, which leads to non-attachment to the external world, and they seek peace of mind. They accept letting things go when they are no longer needed and minimize their personal life. The ultimate enlightenment is the disappearance of this invisible but mysterious 'self.' The Buddha witnessed that there was no authentic self. However, it is complicated for people living in a solid physical world to understand and accept the concept of 'selflessness.' What is perceived as a 'self' is merely a collection of momentary, conditioned dhammas that arise and pass away in rapid succession. Thus, the idea of an immutable, eternal self is a misconception.

The theory of selflessness (anattā) is the fundamental doctrine that can build peace and harmony in the world. The practice of selflessness is a method that enables one to notice an individual's 'better' or 'worse' change, or to observe one's constant change, without relying on mystical or sublime doctrine (Pedulla, 1999). The practical methods emphasize

behavioral techniques, cognitive processing, self-reflection, and growth, encouraging individuals to take responsibility for themselves and their communities. The understanding that one's existence is related to others and the surrounding environment reveals interconnected relationships between beings and individuals, as well as between beings and the world. Understanding the importance of an individual influences communication, and vice versa, which may, to a certain extent, lead to a particular behavior and equilibrium attitude, as guided by specific instructions. This awareness of selflessness relates to the role of individuals, especially politicians, in the negotiation process as well as the conduct of security and peace operations in different regions.

Selfless awareness provides individuals with the opportunity to engage in dialogue and listen to one another, while also fostering a more selfless perspective. Therefore, we should seek beneficial solutions that promote cooperation, coexistence, and development instead of engaging in destructive conflict.

3. The role of the practice of selflessness (*anattā*) in the reduction of conflict and struggle. Well over two thousand years ago, the Buddha pointed out that the root of all suffering and conflict is attachment—or, in other words, clinging to the notions of 'self' and 'what belongs to self.' He also acknowledged that there is absolutely no self within man but only a collection of twelve elements of the chain of dependent origination (Mejor, 2016). While humanity constantly seeks the path of peace through diverse means, including politics, economics, and cooperation, etc. Buddhism, on the other hand, proposes a deeper path that begins with inner transformation, namely, starting from the realization of selflessness. Selflessness is not only a philosophical concept but also a practical approach to resolving conflicts and addressing contradictory issues. It turns out that every dispute stems from the attachment of the self and what belongs to the self. Awareness of selflessness, that is, awareness of un-becoming, is necessary and timely to create world peace in the 21st century (Carlisle, 2006a).

As analyzed above, selflessness means that there is no immutable or independent "self" in

man (Gombrich, 2009). Human beings are just a set of five elements called the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha), including form (rūpa-kkhandha), sensation (vedanā-kkhandha), perception (saññā-kkhandha), mental formation (saṅkhāra-kkhandha), and consciousness (viññāṇakkhandha). The Buddha explained that the world (loka) is made up of six sensory experiences, all of which are selfless because there is no self (atta) and nothing that truly belongs to the self (Christian, 2017). This explanation means that the five aggregates, the six senses, and the six external objects are all selfless (Mathers et al., 2013). Awareness of anattā can help one develop a right view and direct understanding of Buddhism, as it is associated with impermanence (anicca) and suffering (dukkha) (Harvey, 2013). When one sees this clearly, they understand that all phenomena, including oneself and others, are unreal and transient, and thus let go of attachment and arrogant self. Every conflict or struggle stems from the thought of 'self': 'I am right,' 'I am offended,' 'I have to win.' People are often deceived by the illusion they create because they always have the potential to become something, surpass others, or surpass themselves with their existing passions and desires. (Carlisle, 2006b). An illusory state that encompasses the entire inner mind, dominated by the three toxic roots of greed (lobha), anger (dosa), and delusion (moha), clouds reason and causes unconscious actions, words, and thinking. In order to protect their own views, thoughts, and wills, they are willing to dismiss the views and thoughts of others by using force or the voice of big countries to crush small countries. This attitude is readily apparent in meetings of global political leaders at international conferences. Peace and prosperity cannot occur if nations lack respect for one another. The lack of respect stems from too much personal ego, making it difficult for leaders to negotiate bilaterally. From here, regional wars or world wars can occur due to a lack of dialogue between political leaders, and it is clear that this stems from a personal ego, which is invisible yet has undeniable destructive power for peace. Contemplating selflessness through mindfulness meditation helps us realize that emotions and thoughts are merely phenomena of birth and death, without a fixed subject. This technique is considered a method of practicing selflessness to address the problems of the

times. According to Thich Nhat Hanh, a renowned peace activist and Buddhist Zen master who also leads retreats worldwide on the "art of mindful living." In his lectures, Thich Nhat Hanh emphasizes the parallel combination of 'stopping,' or concentrating, and 'observing in the present moment.' (Nhat Hanh, 1990). He encouraged the practice of controlled breathing, which involves focusing the mind on the breath to return to oneself and regain balance between body and mind. While "observing", each person discerns the body and mind with the practice of mindfulness to look deeply into their true nature. Through the pure practice of consciously monitoring the breath and paying attention to the body during the breathing process, a time will come when the breath, body, and mind become united inherently. We are then ready to observe clearly and deeply the sensations (vedanas), sankharas, and psychological objects (dharma) that arise in the field of cognition. During this observation, Thich Nhat Hanh stated that to observe means to become one with the object being observed. We observe the power of mindfulness, which illuminates and transforms. By directing one's attention to phenomena such as breathing, sensations, thoughts, and emotions, one gains a direct understanding of these experiences. By experiencing the truth of suffering, impermanence, and most especially, selflessness, this type of wisdom allows one to see these qualities more clearly in everything outside oneself (Carlisle, 2006b). The practice of mindful observation, based on the doctrine of selflessness, is indeed an important technique that needs to be promoted to help individuals practice, master, and control their own minds, thereby bringing inner peace.

4. Selflessness and global peace

On the social level, collective self-grasping (in the form of extreme nationalism, selfish religion, or political power) is the cause of war and division of the world. Here, the author will examine various perspectives on religion and peace issues related to the topic. Overall, the abovementioned texts from the sacred scriptures of the world's religions consistently

demonstrate that peace is a fundamental principle shared by all religions. For example, Christianity appeals: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." (Matthew 5:9); or Islam with the following slogans: "Peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you" — Assalāmu' alaykum warahmatullāhiwabarakātuh (The Qur'an, 24:61). However, the question arises: if religions promote peace, why are there wars around the globe that stem from conflicts involving these peaceful religions?

It is possible to provide several causes and reasons behind this. Undoubtedly, one reason stems from the contradiction between theory and practice, where the original spirit of these religions emphasized peace and harmony. However, their followers often deviated from their cherished religious principles and practices, instead fighting in the name of peace. Similarly, partly due to a misguided approach to belief and understanding, and partly due to religious extremism, coupled with a cautious approach to every problem facing humanity, world peace seems to be at a stagnant stage even at the dawn of the 21st century, in which commitments to maintain and keep peacekeeping have been implemented by the international community. In short, the world's significant religions still cannot see each other as a brotherhood, coexistence, and development, but rather view themselves as individuals with distinct characteristics that cannot be mixed with other belief systems. Therefore, it is essential to mention that the message of peace, as interpreted by different religions, can be disseminated to the human family to promote global awareness of the necessity and importance of peace. A key aspect of achieving justice and equity in international affairs is ensuring global peace. Similarly, on both individual and national and international levels, a peaceful attitude will pave the way for the creation of a secure global community. According to the United Nations statement, a culture of peace is one where values, attitudes, and behaviors are governed by tolerance, justice, freedom of thought, fair play, respect for life, and diversity, along with a rejection of violence.

The doctrine of selflessness reminds us that there is no absolute "self" or "themselves", but that they are all interdependent—coexisting together in a dependent way. People cannot survive without food, water, sunlight, plants, and so on. Humans should inevitably learn

how to protect and respect all beings, including sentient beings that do not possess the same level of awareness as humans. This knowledge is one of the recognitions leading to harmony and coexistence, essential for survival and development, from the perspective of the wisdom of an enlightened being. This awareness fosters compassion (mettā) and wisdom (paññā), which enables people to respect and sympathize with one another. It is a mutual understanding that leads to an attitude of cooperation and dialogue, jointly finding solutions for each country and nation, rather than imposing views from one large country on a smaller one. It is the non-discrimination between friend and foe that demonstrates that people work with an impartial, pure perspective, one that is not dominated by greed, hatred, and ignorance. Furthermore, it is the ego's absent perspective and communal thinking that leads to a shared responsibility for the entire community, society, and the world, not the selfish, narrow-minded individual ego. Therefore, selflessness does not lead to passivity but opens up a global ethic based on relationships, mutual assistance, and harmony. When each person behaves in a spirit of non-selflessness, all borders of discrimination and hatred will gradually dissipate.

5. Conclusion

World peace will not be possible if each individual continues to fight within themselves. Selflessness is the foundation of peace, because it eradicates attachment and hatred – the two leading causes of all conflict and struggle. In the face of some of the world's most tense situations, such as those in the Middle East and the borders around India today, it is time for leaders to recognize a familiar voice calling for harmony between communities and parties, especially the voice of the United Nations in maintaining peace. Such an urgent task can be carried out through various means, one of which is the education of selfless awareness through ethical methods and meditation as an academic approach, along with social peace through the media. The doctrine of selflessness, which emphasizes the inner peace of each individual, can therefore make global peace a reality. It can be done by starting with awareness education that defines the self as fluid. This immediate solution will help create a new wave of awareness of the 'Culture of Inner Peace' – a slogan of the 21st

century. When people understand that "there is no separate self," they will live with love, wisdom, and understanding, seeing themselves in others. This whole life is a series of interrelated processes that coexist, in which there can be no figure of a single individual or an ego that can rule the world. It is this awakening that the Buddha opened – the path from inner peace within the individual to universal peace for all humanity – the path leading to the realization of not-self, encompassing both internal and external phenomena.

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